

Tip sheet

Managing wellbeing on the night shift

Not all of us take so easily to working nights – and even if we're natural night owls, the long periods between time in the sun can have adverse effects. Here are our best tips for maintaining your overall mental health while working nights.



Food tips

- Stick as closely as possible to normal day/night pattern of food intake
- Aim for three satisfying meals across a 24hr period
- Minimise intake between midnight and 6am – try to eat at the beginning and end of a shift
- Avoid large meals for 1-2 hours before sleep; eat breakfast before day sleep to avoid waking hungry
- Choose healthy whole foods – protein, vegetables, eggs, nuts
- Avoid sugar-rich foods and non-fibre carb foods (e.g. white bread)
- Avoid caffeine up to 5 hours before sleep.

At work

- If possible, find a relaxed and sociable eating area conducive to digestion and absorption of nutrients
- Avoid snacking – this prevents weight gain and energy spikes
- Bond with co-shift workers – ask for help if you need it
- Keep busy to stay alert
- Drink plenty of water throughout the night.

Outside of work

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Create a regular sleep routine and practice good sleep hygiene
- Create a restful environment at home (move devices out of the bedroom)
- Monitor your health:
 - Get vitamin D levels checked regularly – deficiency is linked to a range of health risks
 - Have yearly blood tests e.g. fasting glucose to detect diabetes risk
- Make sure you have adequate time between shifts for sleep, meal preparation, exercise, family time and hobbies
- Engage in as many of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing as you can manage.

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